

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 813

S E C R E T MOSCOW 7656

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AFPS, PFOR, UR

SUBJ: AMBASSADORIAL AIRLIFT SUPPORT

REF: MOSCOW 7628

1. DURING MY CALL ON KORNIYENKO THIS MORNING ON OTHER MATTERS, I RAISED QUESTION OF AMBASSADORIAL SUPPORT FLIGHTS (REFTEL). I SAID IT WAS HARD TO UNDERSTAND SOVIET REFUSAL TO ALLOW US TO USE C-141 BECAUSE PLANES OF THIS CONFIGURATION HAD BEEN UTILIZED ON NASA FLIGHTS AS WELL AS TO SUPPORT VARIOUS PREVIOUS PRESIDENTIAL VISITS. I POINTED OUT THAT SOVIET DECISION WAS PARTICULARLY INCONVENIENT FOR US BECAUSE I WILL BE LEAVIN NEXT WEEK AND RETURNING TO MOSCOW ON JUNE 17, AND WE HAD PLANNED TO USE THESE FLIGHTS TO TRANSPORT BULKY CARGO FOR EMBASSY USE. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY FROM KORNIYENKO AS TO WHETHER THIS REFERRED TO MY PERSONAL BELONGINGS, I ASSURED HIM THAT SUCH WAS INDEED THE CASE. THE LONGER TERM PROBLEM, I ADDED, IS THAT THE AIRPLANE FORMERLY USED FOR SUCH SUPPORT FLIGHTS IS BECOMING OBSOLETE AND OUR AIR FORCE DESIRES TO RETIRE THIS PLANE. SOONER OR LATER WE WILL HAVE TO USE A NEWER TYPE OF PLANE AND THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE PRESENTLY AVAILABLE TO US IS THE AIRCRAFT WE HAD REQUESTED.

2. KORNIYENKO RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT THE U.S. AMBASSADOR
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IS THE ONLY AMBASSADOR RESIDENT IN MOSCOW WHO HAS THE

PRIVILEGE OF USING HIS OWN PLANE. IN 1969/1970 WE AGREED, KORNIYENKO SAID, THAT THE PLANE SHOULD BE CIVILIAN PASSENGER-TYPE AND NOT A MILITARY PLANE. AS IT IS, WE CLOSE OUR EYES TO THE FACT THAT YOU USE AN AIR FORCE PLANE, HE SAID. THE AGREEMENT WAS THAT YOU WOULD USE A PLANE WHICH IS SIMILAR IN CONFIGURATION TO PLANES REGULARLY USED BY COMMERCIAL AIRLINES. YOUR FORMER PLANE WAS SIMILAR TO A DC-6 AND WAS THEREFORE ACCEPTABLE TO US. THE PLANE WHICH YOU NOW PROPOSE IS STRICTLY A MILITARY PLANE, KORNIYENKO SAID, AND NO ANALOGOUS CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT EXISTS. FOR A PRESIDENTIAL SUMMIT OR FOR OTHER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE USE OF SUCH A PLANE IS POSSIBLE, BUT ON A REGULAR BASIS IT CANNOT BE PERMITTED. THIS IS PARTICULARLY THE CASE IN THAT ALLOWING THE USE OF ANY PLANE AT ALL IS IN ITSELF AN "INDULGENCE."

3. I TOLD KORNIYENKO THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO GRANT THE SOVIETS SIMILAR PRIVILEGES ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS AND POINTED OUT THAT EARLIER WE HAD USED DIFFERENT KINDS OF PLANES, INCLUDING MILITARY PLANES, FOR AMBASSADORIAL FLIGHTS. THE CHANGE TOOK PLACE IN 1970 WHEN THE WAR WAS ON IN VIETNAM AND WHILE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE MUCH WORSE. SINCE RELATIONS WERE IMPROVED WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE SOVIETS COULD BE MORE FORTHCOMING. IN THIS REGARD, I ASKED HIM WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO USE A MILITARY PLANE WITH THE "U.S. AIR FORCE" MARKINGS PAINTED OVER. HE REPLIED THAT THIS WOULD NOT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE. THE CRUX OF THE QUESTION WAS WHETHER THE TYPE OF AIRCRAFT WAS USED FOR CIVILAIN AS WELL AS MILITARY PURPOSES. A 707 OR DC-6 OR ANY SIMILAR PLANE WOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEM, KORNIYENKO SAID.

4. AT THIS POINT, SEEING THAT THERE WAS NO GIVE TO HIS POSITION, I ASKED WHETHER WE COULD USE A C-118 FOR THE FLIGHT NEXT WEEK. KORNIYENKO REPLIED THAT THIS WOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEM. WE WILL HAVE TO SUBMIT A REQUEST AS USUAL, HE ADDED, BUT HE ASSURED ME THAT THIS WOULD BE PERMITTED BY THE SOVIETS.

5. COMMENT: AIR ATTACHE WILL BE SUBMITTING A REQUEST THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS FOR USE OF A C-118 FOR THE SUPPORT FLIGHT NEXT WEEK. WE WILL DEAL WITH LONGER RANGE PROBLEMS IN
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SEPARATE MESSAGE.
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